

Education and Local Government Interim Committee Helena, Montana June 24, 2013

- Representative Kristin Hansen
- Representative Donald W. Jones
- Representative Edith McClafferty
- Representative Jean Price
- Representative Daniel Salomon
- Representative Tom Woods
- Senator Tom Facey
- Senator Dave Lewis
- Senator Frederick Moore
- Senator Matthew Rosendale
- Senator Sharon Stewart-Peregoy
- Senator Jonathan Windy Boy

Good Day Committee Members. We are unable to speak in person at today's inaugural meeting of the Education and Local Government Interim Committee, but let us introduce ourselves to all of you. We are Arthur and Kathleen Hassan of Trout Creek, Montana, married for 31 years with no children. We have witnessed a steady failing of America's basic learning institutions, especially year after year with promises of better and better education reform. And, all the billions thrown its way, hasn't made it so.

Please accept our written testimony concerning a matter of grave importance about one of Montana's most precious treasures, her youth. The recently adopted Common Core State Standards, specifically the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, stands at the helm of all that is wrong with a top-down, controlling approach to education advancing a global competing marketplace as a moniker for success.

During this year's 63rd Legislative Session, we actively participated with correspondence and phone calls to our legislators and various committee members asking each one not to support the portion of Senate Bill 175 that specifically funded Common Core implementation. Much to our dismay, SB175 passed allowing some funding to go forward. It is our view this is a tragic misrepresentation of appropriations.

Through various research medium, such as the *Pioneer Institute's Public Policy Research White Paper* by Emmet McGroarty and Jane Robbins, as well as the *Heartland Institute's Policy Brief* by Joy Pullmann, we have concluded Common Core is wrong for Montana because of these reasons, among many:

- Each child in the education system is "unique." That being said, Common Core reduces schooling to a one-size fits all model. ***Unacceptable***

- Frequent data collection techniques intrudes on student and family privacy. Over 400 distinct data points are being sought to build a stored database. In light of recent and shocking news about NSA (National Security Administration) surveillance of all Americans, this Common Core measure is most unwelcome. *Unacceptable*
- Federal Government and Private Organizations have imposed the standards on the states, denying citizens and their elected representatives a meaningful chance to review and offer an opportunity for input. Unproven and untested assessments leave no evidence of a successful track record. *Unacceptable*
- Progressive educators and bureaucrats have long advocated for sweeping national control over education as a means of matching the citizenry to the workforce needs of the industry. *Unacceptable*
- Common Core Standards are of mediocre academic quality. Both English language arts and mathematics are deficient and rest on questionable philosophies. Students will be evaluated on behavior rather than content knowledge. *Unacceptable*
- Financial costs to constantly upgrade computer hardware and software, teacher retraining, and revised textbooks are unable to be accurately determined. Local school districts could be routinely asking for increased levies to cover higher than expected annual expenditures. *Unacceptable*

In summary, Montana's adoption of "Common Core Standards" produces more negatives and significant causes for alarm while it additionally achieves the removal of local control within communities, school districts, and among parents.

We seek the support of the entire Education and Local Government Interim Committee members that no additional funding be written into upcoming legislation. If the Interim Committee has the power to cease further implementation of Common Core prior to the 2015 Session, we ask this be addressed during your session. We know we are mere "Davids" fighting Goliath, but we ask your assistance in the Common Core battle.

Thank you for your time today!

Sincerely,

Arthur C. and Kathleen S. Hassan
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Trout Creek, Montana 59874